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ABSTRACT

This paper connects recent research with common student problems in writing research papers and offers an analysis of the range of synthesis tasks and some reasons why students have difficulty with the demands of these tasks. The paper focuses on the student's problem of not knowing how to think about material in ways that allow him or her to say something original or persuasive and suggests that this problem may be reduced if students learn to read their sources rhetorically. The paper argues that such a strategy would allow readers to identify interesting conflicts, discrepancies, and rhetorical problems, as dissonances (gaps) of communication between writer/reader or reader/audience. Teaching students to think about such dissonances could help them to find original things to say about their sources and rhetorically purposeful reasons to discuss their topics with specifically imagined audiences. The fictional composite Shirley, a college sophomore derived from published research and personal experience, is used in the paper to discuss common student problems in the context of a real term paper. (Five figures of rhetorical situations and tasks are included; two appendixes containing Shirley's paper and a range of research subtasks and 57 references are attached.) (KEH)

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Center for the Study of Writing

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November, 1989

University of California, Berkeley
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SHIRLEY AND THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT: WHY IT IS SO HARD FOR STUDENTS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE RESEARCHED ANALYSES

by

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Although the phrase "term paper" connotes for many teachers their worst experiences with undergraduate writing, researched writing assignments remain a staple in most English departments: Ford and Perry (1982) found that 84% of freshman composition programs and 40% of advanced composition programs included instruction in writing research papers. There seems to be good reason for the continuing popularity of the term paper assignment. Recent research in writing and learning appears to show that students who write about their reading learn more key concepts than students who do not write (Newell, 1984) and that analytic writing about one's reading fosters in-depth learning (Langer & Applebee, 1987; cf. McGinley & Tierney [1989] for a summary of the research on the influence of reading and writing on thinking and learning). Analytic researched writing assignments seem a logical way to prepare students for the writing they will do in their content-area courses: Rose's (1983) survey of writing assignments at UCLA revealed that students in content-area courses are routinely asked to write expository and persuasive papers dealing with large bodies of information, to select, arrange, and reflect on the material, and to marshall proofs that are considered appropriate within the specific discipline. Probably every teacher who has tutored in a university writing center or been involved with a writing-across-the-curriculum movement can attest, as I can, to the validity of Rose's findings: When content-area teachers give writing assignments, they expect students to organize, analyze, and apply the material as well as to regurgitate it accurately. It seems appropriate, therefore, to ask students to practice these skills in their lower-level writing courses.

Yet the term paper, or more broadly, the researched writing assignment, remains a source of pain both to teachers and students. And although the "researched essay" as a topic has been much written about in composition journals (cf. Ford, Rees, & Ward, 1980), it has been little studied. In the introduction to their "Comprehensive Bibliography," Ford et al. point out that most of the over 200 articles that have been published in professional journals during the last half century describe classroom methods. "Few," they say, "are of a theoretical nature or based on research, and almost none cites even one other work on the subject" (p. 2). This lack of rigorous attention may be an important source of the difficulty with researched writing assignments. As Odell (1980) points out, students may often write poorly because they have not learned the specific mental activities needed to explore their topics in interesting ways. The reason why they may not have learned these activities is that we may not know ourselves what they are. Odell urges "that we attempt to identify the conceptual activities entailed in the specific writing assignments students are asked to do. If we can identify these activities, we may be able to see how both we and our colleagues in other disciplines can be much more helpful to students as they explore and try to write about a particular set of materials" (p. 45).

We need a theory-based discussion of researched writing, a discussion grounded in the findings of the published research, of the nature and reasons for our students' problems with writing persuasive researched papers. To understand how to teach students to write such papers, we also need a better understanding of the demands of synthesis tasks.

This paper attempts to connect recent research with common student problems in writing papers. It offers an analysis of the range of synthesis tasks and some reasons why students have difficulty with the demands of these tasks. It also suggests a solution to one of the most common and frustrating problems of teaching students to write original researched arguments: The problem—that students may not know how to think about the material in ways that allow them to say anything original or persuasive—may be reduced if students learn to read their sources rhetorically, because such a strategy allows readers to identify interesting conflicts, discrepancies, and rhetorical problems in the sources. The strategy of rhetorical reading, recently described by Haas and Flower (1988), is presented through variations on Kinneavy's (1971) metaphor of the rhetorical triangle. The paper argues that teaching students to think about the results of such rhetorical readings as problems, i.e., as dissonances (gaps) of communication between, say, writer and reader or reader and audience, and teaching students to think about why such dissonances matter, can help them to find original things to say about their sources and rhetorically purposeful reasons to discuss their topics with specifically imagined audiences.

As an example for discussing this complex topic, I have used a fictional college sophomore called Shirley. Shirley is a composite derived from published research, from my own experience as a student, and from students I have taught at an open admissions community college and at public and private universities. Of course, not every student will have every problem discussed in this paper. The fictional composite Shirley offers a convenient way to discuss common student problems in the context of a real term paper.

Shirley, like the other students used as examples in this paper, has certain traits. The "Shirley" type of student is an intelligent, well-motivated native speaker of English who has no extraordinary knowledge deficits or emotional problems. She comes from a home where education is valued, and her parents do reading and writing tasks at home and at their jobs. Shirley has certain skills. When she entered first grade, she knew how to listen to and tell stories, and she soon became proficient at reading stories and at writing narratives. During her academic life, Shirley has learned such studying skills as finding the main idea and remembering facts.

As portrayed by the relevant research, a student like Shirley can read and summarize source texts accurately (Spivey, 1983; Winograd, 1984). She can select material that is relevant for her purpose in writing (Hayes, Waterman, & Robinson, 1977; Langer, 1984). She can make connections between the available information and her purpose for writing, including the needs of her readers when the audience is specified (Atlas, 1979). She can make original connections among ideas (Brown & Day, 1983; Langer, in press). She can create an appropriate, audience-based structure for her paper (Spivey, 1983), take notes and use them effectively while composing her paper (Kennedy, 1985), and she can present information clearly and smoothly (Spivey, 1983), without relying on the phrasing of the original sources (Atlas, 1979; Winograd, 1984). Shirley is, in my experience, a typical college student with an average intellectual maturity and an adequate academic preparation.

Although students like Shirley seem to have everything going for them, they often experience difficulty with assignments that require them to write original persuasive papers based on textual sources. In this example, Shirley is having difficulty in her sophomore-level writing class. Shirley, who likes English history, decided to write about the Battle of Agincourt (page 1 of her paper is included as Appendix A). She found half a dozen histories that described the circumstances of the battle in a few pages each. Although the topic was unfamiliar, the sources agreed on many of the facts. Shirley collated these facts into her own version, noting but not discussing discrepant details, borrowing what she assumed to be her sources' purpose of retelling the story, and modelling the narrative structure of her paper on that of her sources. Since the only comments Shirley could think of would be to agree or

disagree with her sources, who had told her everything she knew about the Battle of Agincourt, she did not comment on the material; instead, she concentrated on telling the story clearly and more completely than her sources had done. She was surprised when her paper received a grade of C-.

Shirley's difficulties are typical of students whom I have taught at both private and public colleges and universities in writing classes ranging from freshman to graduate level. The freshman in Kaufer and Geisler's (1989) study and the sophomores in Kantz (1987) who organized their papers around the common topics from their sources and whose papers listed the ideas they liked best illustrate typical "Shirley" behavior. Shirleys perform the task of writing original persuasive researched papers at a level well below what the research on individual skills might lead one to expect. In a recent class of Intermediate Composition taught at a public university, in which the students were instructed to create an argument using at least four textual sources that took differing points of view, Mary, who analyzed the coverage of a recent championship football game, ranked her source articles in order from those whose approach she most approved of to those she least approved of. Charlie, who analyzed the various approaches taken by the media to the Kent State shootings in 1970, was surprised and disappointed to find that all of the sources seemed slanted, either by the perspective of the reporter or by that of the people interviewed. Mary and Charlie did not understand why their instructor commented that their papers lacked a genuine argument.

The task of writing researched papers that express original arguments presents many difficulties, which are summarized in Appendix B, "Range of Research Assignment Subtasks." Besides the obvious problems of citation format and coordination of source materials with the emerging written product, such a synthesis task can vary in difficulty according to the number and length of the sources, the abstractness or familiarity of the topic, the uses that the writer must make of the material, the degree and quality of original thought required, and the extent to which the sources will supply the structure and purpose of the new paper. It is usually easier to write a paper that uses all of only one short source on a familiar topic than to write a paper that selects material from many long sources on a topic that one must learn as one reads and writes. It is easier to quote than to paraphrase, and it is easier to build the paraphrases, without comment or with random comments, into a description of what one finds than it is to use them as evidence in an original argument. It is easier to use whatever one likes, or everything one finds, than to formally select, evaluate, and interpret material. It is easier to use the structure and purpose of a source as the basis for one's paper than it is to create a structure or an original purpose. A writing-from-sources task can be as simple as applying and collating concepts from a course to a single textual source and writing a paper that reproduces the structure, tone, and purpose of the original. It can also involve applying abstract concepts from one area to an original problem in a different area, a task that involves creating new relationships among many source materials as one writes a paper that may refer to the sources without resembling them. Even a task that involves summarizing and interpreting a single source can be difficult if the writer must recombine ideas (Garner, 1982) or supply missing top-level ideas (Brown & Day, 1983). Because Shirley knew nothing about the Battle of Agincourt when she began her research, she experienced the difficulty that any reader of a new topic experiences: Lacking appropriate controlling concepts (schemas) that would enable her to interpret the material (Afflerbach, 1985), she found herself unable to do much more than report the facts.

Moreover, a given task can be interpreted as requiring an easy method, a difficult method, or any of a hundred intermediate methods. In this context, Flower (1987) has observed, "The different ways in which students [represent] a 'standard' reading-to-write task to themselves lead to markedly different goals and strategies as well as different organizing plans" (iii). To write a synthesis, Shirley may or may not need to quote, summarize, or select material from her sources; to evaluate the sources for bias, accuracy, or completeness; to develop original ideas; or to persuade a reader. How well she performs any of these tasks—

and *whether* she thinks to perform these tasks—depends on how she reads the texts and on how she interprets the assignment. Shirley's representation of the task, which in this case was easier than her teacher had in mind, depends on the goals that she sets for herself. Shirley interpreted the task as calling for her to tell what she knew about the topic (Flower & Hayes, 1980); hence, she created a knowledge-driven plan for her paper (Flower, Hayes, Schriver, Carey, & Haas, 1986). Her goals depend on her awareness of the possibilities and her confidence in her writing skills.

Obviously, before Shirley can hope to earn her A, she must find a more complex approach to the task. Finding such an approach without specific instruction may, however, be beyond her powers. In twenty years of classes, in a community college, two public universities, and two selective private universities, I have shown page 1 (Appendix A) of Shirley's paper to writing classes and asked them what's wrong with Shirley's approach and how to correct it. Although the students see at once that Shirley had nothing to say about her material, never has a student suggested a way to write an original argument about the Battle of Agincourt. Yet, as the following anecdote shows, methods do exist for creating persuasive papers about even intractably factual topics.

Feeling unhappy about her C, Shirley consulted her friend Alice. Alice, who is an expert student, looked at the task in a completely different way than Shirley did and used strategies for thinking about it that were quite different from Shirley's.

"Who were your sources?" asked Alice. "Winston Churchill, right? A French couple and a few others. And they didn't agree about the details, such as the sizes of the armies. Didn't you wonder why?"

"No," said Shirley. "I thought the history books would know the truth. When they disagreed, I figured that they were wrong on those points. I didn't want to have anything in my paper that was wrong."

"But Shirley," said Alice, "you could have asked if the English and French writers wanted to make a point about the history of their countries and looked to see if the factual differences suggested anything. You could have thought about why a book entitled *A History of France* might talk differently about the battle than a book subtitled *A History of British Progress*. You could even have talked about Shakespeare's *Henry V*, which I know you've read—about how he presents the battle, or about how the King Henry in the play differs from the Henrys in your other books. You would have had an angle, a problem. Dr. Boyer would have loved it."

Alice's representation of the task would have required Shirley to formally select and evaluate her material and to use it as proof in an original argument. Alice was suggesting that Shirley invent an original problem and purpose for her paper and create an original structure for her argument. Alice's task is much more sophisticated than Shirley's (cf. Flower and Hayes, 1981). To write such a paper—to even conceive of the possibility of writing such a paper—Shirley would have to read her sources rhetorically, as nationalistic arguments written to particular audiences.

Shirley replied, "That would take me a year to do! Besides, Henry was a real person. I don't want to make up things." Shirley responded this way because of her relative ignorance of the topic and because, conditioned by years of training to learn "the facts," she believed that histories tell "the truth." When students believe that facts presented by authorities equal "Truth," they may well feel unable to write persuasively about factual topics.

"Well," said Alice, "You're dealing with facts, so there aren't too many choices. If you want to say something original you have to find some new facts or talk about the sources or talk about the material. Do you have any new facts?"

"No!"

"Okay, so what could you say about the material? Your paper told about all the reasons why King Henry wasn't expected to win the battle. Could you have argued that he should have lost because he took too many chances?"

"Gee," said Shirley, "That's awesome! I wish I'd thought of it."

This version of the task uses a variation of the for-against strategy that so many students equate with argument. It would allow Shirley to keep the narrative structure of her paper but would give her an original argument and purpose. To write the argument, Shirley would have only to rephrase the events of the story to take an opposite approach from that of her English sources—emphasizing what she thought were Henry's mistakes and inserting comments to explain why his decisions were mistakes—an easy argument to write. She could also, if she wished, write a conclusion that criticized the cheerleading tone of her British sources. Although students routinely use the for-against strategy when writing about issues, they may not think to apply this simple strategy to factual topics if they believe that collections of facts create "Truth."

As this anecdote reveals, a given topic can be treated in more or less sophisticated ways—and sophisticated goals, such as inventing an original purpose and evaluating sources, can be achieved in relatively simple versions of a task. Research involving less complicated tasks shows that students know that they have many options on how to fulfill even a highly specified assignment (cf. Jeffery, 1981). Children can decide whether to process a text deeply or not (Brown, 1979), and purpose in reading affects processing and monitoring of comprehension (Brown, 1980). Reading purpose affects judgments about what is important or unimportant in a narrative text (Pichert, 1980). Other research tells us that attitudes toward the author and content of a text affect comprehension (Asch, 1952; Hinze, 1961; Shedd 1976; Goldman, 1982).

One implication of Shirley's story is that the instructor gave a weak assignment and an ineffective critique (the task asked for "a researched essay, using at least five sources," and the teacher's only comment referred to Shirley's footnoting technique; cf. Appendix A). The available research suggests that if Dr. Boyer had set Shirley a specific rhetorical problem such as having her report on her material to the class and then testing them on it, and if she had commented on the content of Shirley's paper during the drafts, Shirley might well have come up with a paper that did more than repeat its source material (Nelson & Hayes, 1988). My teaching experience supports this research finding. Also, if Dr. Boyer had told Shirley from the outset that she was expected to say something original and that she should examine her sources as she read them for discrepant facts, conflicts, or other interesting material, Shirley would probably have tried to write an original argument (Kantz, 1988a). And if Dr. Boyer had suggested that Shirley use her notes to comment on her sources and make plans for using them, Shirley might have written a better paper than she did (Kantz, 1988b).

Even if given specific directions to create an original argument, however, Shirley might have had difficulty finding a sophisticated way to perform the task. Her difficulty could come from any of the following causes (the list is intended to be suggestive, not exhaustive): 1) Shirley, like many other students, misunderstood her sources because she read them as stories. 2) Like many other students, she expected her sources to tell her the truth; hence, she equated persuasive writing in this context with "making things up." 3) Like many other students, she

did not understand that facts are a kind of claim and are often used persuasively in so-called objective writing to create an impression. To succeed in Dr. Boyer's class, Shirley must use reading and thinking strategies that may have been neither taught nor encouraged in her earlier work. To read source texts as arguments, students must think about the rhetorical contexts in which they were written rather than read them merely as factual material to be learned. Writing an original persuasive argument based on sources requires students to apply material to a problem or to use it to answer a question, rather than simply to repeat it or evaluate it. These three problems each deserve a separate discussion.

Because historical texts often use a time order, Shirley thought that by retelling the story of the battle she had acted as a historian, doing what her sources did. Because her sources emphasized the completeness of the victory/defeat and its decisive importance in the history of warfare, Shirley thought that if she made these same points in her paper, she had done her job. She believed that story-telling plus a little comment here and there is what historians do. Her job as a reader was thus to learn the story, i.e., so that she could pass a test on it (cf. Vipond and Hunt's [1984] argument that generic expectations affect reading behavior). Shirley's reading was story-driven rather than point-driven (Vipond and Hunt, 1984).

Students commonly misread texts as narratives. When students refer to any written text as "the story," they are telling us that they use narrative strategies to read, regardless of whether their texts are organized as narratives. One reason for Shirley's love of history was probably that when she read it she could combine her story-reading strategies with her studying strategies. Students like Shirley may need to learn to apply basic organizing patterns, such as cause-effect and general-to-specific, to their texts. If, however, Dr. Boyer asks Shirley to respond to her sources in a way that is not compatible with Shirley's understanding of what such sources do, Shirley will have trouble doing the assignment. Dr. Boyer may have to do some preparatory teaching about why certain kinds of texts have certain characteristics and what kinds of problems writers must solve as they design text for a particular audience. She may even have to teach a model for the kind of writing she wants Shirley to do.

The writing version of Shirley's problem, which Flower (1979) calls "writer-based prose," occurs when Shirley organizes what should be an expository analysis as a narrative or when she writes a narrative about how she did her research. Students use time-based organizing patterns wherever possible, regardless of the task, even when such patterns conflict with what they are trying to say and even when they know how to use more sophisticated strategies. In their preliminary drafts, my students frequently organize expository papers with transitional devices such as "the first point" and "the next point." In research papers, they often begin paragraphs with such phrases as "my first source," meaning that it was the first source that the writer found in the library or the first one he read. This strategy appears to combine a story-of-my research structure (Flower, 1979) with a knowledge-telling strategy (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Even when students understand that the assignment asks for more than the fill-in-the-blanks, show-me-you've-read-the-material approach described by Schwegler and Shamoon (1983), they cling to narrative structuring devices. A rank ordering of sources, as with Mary's analysis of the football game coverage with the sources listed in an order of ascending disapproval, represents a small step toward synthesis because it embodies a persuasive evaluation. Teachers needs to be alert to such small signs of growth.

In addition to reading texts as stories, students expect factual texts to tell them "the Truth" because they have learned to see texts statically, as descriptions of truths, instead of as arguments. Shirley did not understand that nonfiction texts exist as arguments in rhetorical contexts. "After all," she reasoned, "how can one argue about the date of a battle or the sizes of the armies?" Churchill, however, described the battle in much more detail than Shirley's other sources, apparently because he wished to persuade his readers to take pride in England's tradition of military achievement. Guizot and Guizot de Witt, on the other hand, said very little

about the battle (beyond describing it as "a monotonous and lamentable repetition of the disasters of Crecy and Poitiers" [p. 397]) because they saw the British invasion as a sneaky way of taking advantage of a feud among the various branches of the French royal family. Shirley's story/study skills might not have allowed her to recognize such arguments, especially because Dr. Boyer did not teach her to look for them.

When I have asked classes of junior and senior writing students to choose a topic and find four sources on it that disagreed, I am repeatedly asked, "How can sources disagree in four different ways? After all, there's only pro and con." Students expect textbooks and other authoritative sources either to tell them "the Truth" (i.e., facts) or to express an opinion with which they may agree or disagree. Mary's treatment of the football coverage reflects this belief, as does Charlie's surprise when he found that even his most comprehensive sources on the Kent State killings omitted certain facts, such as interviews with National Guardsmen. Students' desire for "Truth" leads them to use a collating approach whenever possible, as Shirley did (cf. Appendix A), because students believe that "the Truth" will include all of the "facts" and will reconcile all conflicts. This belief may be another manifestation of the knowledge-telling strategy (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987), in which students write down everything they can think of about a topic. When conflicts cannot be reconciled and the topic does not admit a for-against stance, students often have little to say. They may omit the material altogether, include it without comment, as Shirley did, or jumble it together without any plan for building an argument.

The skills that Shirley has practiced for most of her academic career—finding the main idea and learning content—allow her to agree or disagree. To write more complex arguments, however, she needs a technique that yields deeper insights and gives her something more to say—in other words, a technique for constructing more complex representations of texts that allow room for more sophisticated goals. She also needs strategies for analysis that allow her to build original arguments.

One way to help students like Shirley is to teach the concept of rhetorical situation. A convenient tool for thinking about this concept is Kinneavy's triangular diagram of the rhetorical situation (Kinneavy, 1971; cf. Figure 1). Kinneavy, analyzing Aristotle's description of rhetoric, posits that every communicative situation has three parts, a speaker/writer (the Encoder), an audience (the Decoder), and a topic (Reality). (For convenience, Kinneavy's labels of Encoder, Decoder, and Reality have been rephrased as I, You, and It.) Although all discourse involves all three aspects of communication, a given type of discourse may pertain more to a particular point of the triangle than to the others, e.g., a diary entry may exist primarily to express the thoughts of the writer (the Encoder); an advertisement may exist primarily to persuade a reader (the Decoder). Following Kinneavy, I have posited particular goals for each corner of the triangle. Since all three aspects of the rhetorical situation are present and active in any communicative situation, a primarily referential text such as Churchill's *The Birth of Britain* may have a persuasive purpose and may depend for some of its credibility on readers' familiarity with the author. The term "rhetorical reading," then (cf. Haas & Flower, 1988), means teaching students to read a text as a message sent by someone to somebody for a reason. Shirley, Mary, and Charlie are probably practiced users of rhetorical persuasion in non-academic contexts. They may, however, never have learned to apply this thinking in a conscious and deliberate way to academic tasks (cf. Kroll, 1984).

Rhetorical reading has not been empirically tested as a teaching device, and it may not easily lend itself to such testing because the reading/composing skills involved in producing original researched arguments based on such readings may be too complex to cause measurably different behavior or noticeably improved writing in a single assignment or even in a semester.

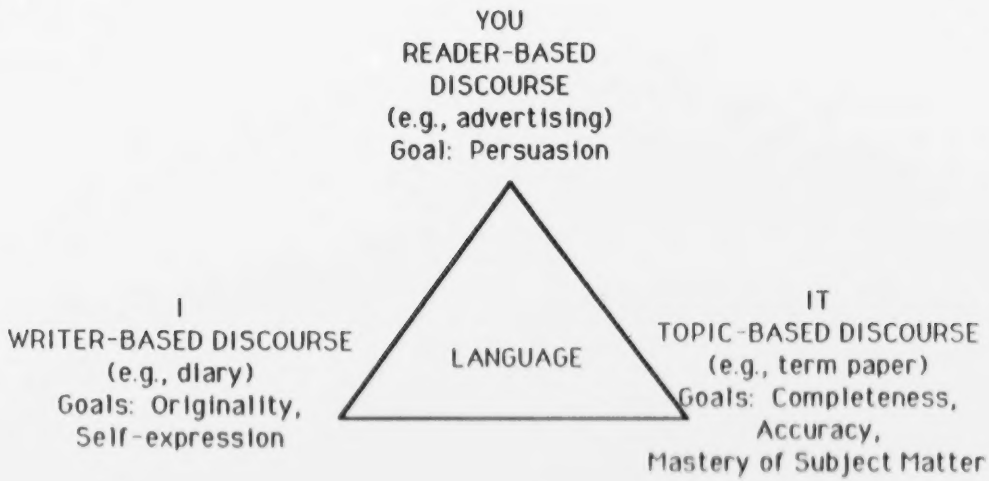


Figure 1: Aspects and Goals of Rhetorical Situations

However, the story of Alice and Shirley and the case of Terri, given below, suggest that rhetorical reading might be a useful strategy to teach students.

The concept of rhetorical situation offers insight into the nature of students' representations of a writing task. Figure 2 uses the rhetorical triangle to illustrate the operative goals in Shirley's and Alice's approaches to the term paper. In Figure 2, Shirley and Alice (the writers) are at the "I" point, the topic is at the "It" point, and Dr. Boyer (the audience) is at the "You" point. The "I" point represents the student's involvement in the task. Shirley's "I" goal would be credibility; her "It" goal would be to use all of the subject matter, and her "You" goal would be to tell a complete story to a reader whom she thinks of as an examiner—to use the classic phrase from the famous book by Britton et al. (1975)—i.e., a reader who wants to know if Shirley can pass an exam on the subject of the Battle of Agincourt. Alice's goals are quite different. Her "I" goal is to be original, to say something new; her "It" goal is to treat the topic as a resource to be used; and her "You" goal is to persuade Dr. Boyer that her ideas have merit. Task representation does not change the dimensions of the rhetorical situation: The "I", "You," and "It" are always present. But the way a writer represents the task to herself does affect the ways that she thinks about those dimensions—and whether the writer thinks about them at all. When students do not think about these dimensions, they may rely on their default assumptions that the content is to be regurgitated, that the reader is an examiner who grades for completeness, and that their task is to demonstrate competent reading and quoting skills.

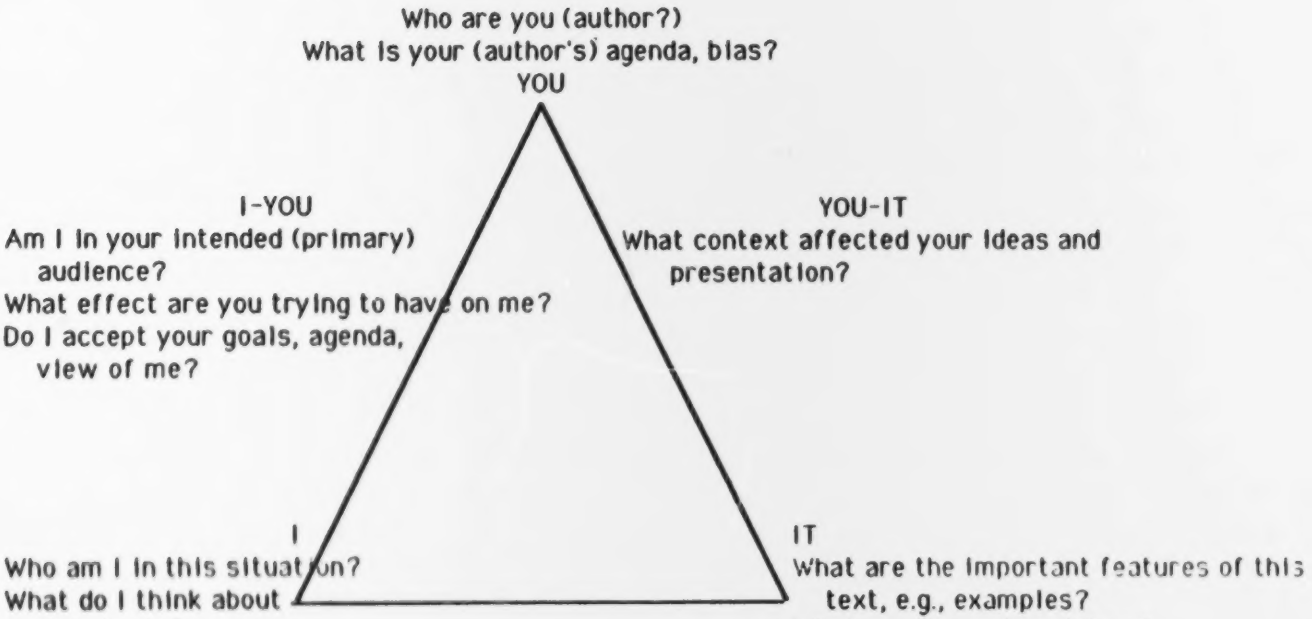
In the context of a research assignment, rhetorical skills can be used to read the sources as well as to design the paper. Although teachers have probably always known that expert readers use such strategies, the concept of rhetorical reading is new to the literature. Haas and Flower (1988) have shown that expert readers used rhetorical strategies "to account for author's purpose, context, and effect on the audience . . . to recreate or infer the rhetorical situation of the text" (p. 176; cf. also Bazerman, 1985). Readers who used these strategies, used in addition to formulating main points and paraphrasing content, understood a text more completely and more quickly than did readers who concentrated exclusively on content.

As Haas and Flower (1988) point out, teaching students to read rhetorically is difficult. They suggest that appropriate pedagogy might include "direct instruction . . . modeling, and . . . encouraging students to become contributing and committed members of rhetorical communities" (p. 182). One early step might be to teach students a set of heuristics based on the three aspects of the communicative triangle, as shown in Figure 3. Using such questions could help students set goals for their reading.

In this figure, the "I" point is the reader, who is decoding the source text, "You" represents the author of the text, and "It" is the text (in all of the figures, "I" represents the person doing the activity, whether it is reading or writing; "It" represents the text; and "You" represents a person "out there" somewhere who is involved with the text that "I" is acting upon). As Figure 3 shows, readers may consider only one point of the triangle at a time, as in such questions as "Who are you (i.e., the author)?"; they may also consider two or three aspects of the rhetorical situation in a single question. Asking such questions (the list in Figure 3 is intended to be suggestive, not exhaustive) gives students a way of formulating goals relating to purpose as well as content.

If Shirley, for example, had asked an "I-You" question such as "Am I in your intended audience?" she might have realized that Churchill and the Guizots were writing for specific audiences. If she had asked a "You-It" question like "What context affected your ideas and presentation?" she might not have ignored Churchill's remark, "All these names [Amiens, Boves, Bethencourt] are well known to our generation" (p. 403). As it was, she missed Churchill's signal that he was writing to the survivors of the first World War, who had vainly hoped that it would be the war to end all wars. If Shirley had used an "I-You-It" question such

Figure 2: Goals of Different Task Representations in a Rhetorical Context


Who are you (author?)
What is your (author's) agenda, bias?
YOU
I-YOU
Am I in your intended (primary) audience?
What effect are you trying to have on me?
Do I accept your goals, agenda, view of me?
YOU-IT
What context affected your ideas and presentation?
I
Who am I in this situation?
What do I think about this topic?
IT
What are the important features of this text, e.g., examples?
What are the main points of (dis)agreement among the sources?

I-IT

What does this text say about the problem I'm interested in?
How accurate, complete is this text?
How well does this text match what I know about the topic?

I-YOU-IT

What are you saying to help me with the problem you assume I have?
What devices have you used to manipulate my response?

as "What are you saying to help me with the problem you assume I have?" she might have understood that the authors of her sources were writing to different readers for different reasons; this understanding might have given her something to say. When I gave Shirley's source texts to freshmen students, asked them to use the material in an original argument, and taught them this heuristic for rhetorical reading, I received, for example, papers that warned undergraduates about national pride as a source of authorial bias in history texts. (I also received papers that compared the English tactics at Agincourt to those of the Viet Cong in Vietnam; that compared the heroic qualities of Henry V to those of such current heroes as President Reagan, Jane Fonda, and Michael Jackson; and that compared the economic relationship of medieval England and France with the economic relationships of seventeenth-century Spain and Latin America and with twentieth-century United States and Soviet Russia. Even when students have nothing to say about a specific topic, they can use it persuasively as the basis of an analogy.)

A factual topic such as the Battle of Agincourt may present special problems because of the seemingly intransigent nature of facts. Like many people, Shirley believes that you can either agree or disagree with issues and opinions, but you can only accept the so-called facts. She believes that facts are what you learn from textbooks, opinions are what you have about clothes, and arguments are what you have with your mother when you want to stay out late at night. Shirley is not in a position to disagree with the facts about the battle (e.g., "No, I think the French won"), and a rhetorical analysis may seem at first to offer minimal rewards (e.g., "According to the Arab, Jewish, and Chinese calendars the date was really . . .").

Alice, who thinks rhetorically, understands that both facts and opinions are essentially the same kind of statement: They are claims. Alice understands that the only essential difference between a fact and an opinion is how they are received by an audience. (This discussion is derived from Toulmin's [1959] model of an argument as consisting of claims proved with data and backed by ethical claims called warrants. Any aspect of an argument may be questioned by the audience and must then be supported with further argument.) In a rhetorical argument, a fact is a claim that an audience will accept as being true without requiring proof, although they may ask for an explanation. An opinion is a claim that an audience will not accept as true without proof, and which, after the proof is given, the audience may well decide has only a limited truth, i.e., it's true for you but not for me. An audience may decide that even though a fact is unassailable, the interpretation or use of the fact is open to debate.

For example, Shirley's sources gave different numbers for the size of the British army at Agincourt; these numbers, which must have been estimates, were claims masquerading as facts. Shirley did not understand this. She thought that disagreement signified error, whereas it probably signified rhetorical purpose. The probable reason why the Guizots gave a relatively large estimate for the English army and did not mention the size of the French army was so that their French readers would find the British victory easier to accept. Likewise, Churchill's relatively small estimate for the size of the English army and his high estimate for the French army magnified the brilliance of the English victory. Before Shirley could create an argument about the Battle of Agincourt, she needed to understand that, even in her history textbooks, the so-called facts are claims that may or may not be supported by other claims, and which are made by writers who work in a certain political climate for a particular audience. She may, of course, never learn this principle unless Dr. Boyer teaches her rhetorical theory and uses the research paper as a chance for Shirley to practice rhetorical problem solving. The key word here, of course, is practice: If Dr. Boyer sees her assignments as achievement tests, she is unlikely to give students many chances to fail safely, and her students are unlikely to want to take the chances that practice necessarily involves.

For most of her academic life, Shirley has done school tasks that require her to find main ideas and important facts; success in these tasks usually hinges on agreeing with the teacher

about what the text says. Such study skills form an essential basis for doing reading-to-write tasks: Obviously, a student can only use sources to build an argument if she can first read the sources accurately (use of study techniques has been shown to improve comprehension [Brown & Palincsar, 1985]; cf. also Luftig, 1983, and Short & Ryan, 1984). However, synthesizing tasks often require that readers not accept the authors' ideas. Baker and Brown (1984) have pointed out that one reason why people misread texts is that they blindly accept an author's ideas instead of considering a divergent interpretation. Yet if we want students to learn to build original arguments from texts, we must teach them the skills needed to create divergent interpretations. We must teach them to think about "facts" and "opinions" as claims that are made by writers to particular readers for particular reasons in particular historical contexts.

Reading source texts rhetorically gives students a powerful tool for creating a persuasive analysis. Although no research exists as yet to suggest that teaching students to read rhetorically will improve their writing, I have seen its effect in successive drafts of students' papers. Rhetorical reading, for example, allowed Mary to move from simply summarizing and evaluating her sources on local coverage of the championship football game to constructing a rationale for articles that covered the fans rather than the game. Rhetorical analysis enabled Charlie to move from summarizing his sources to understanding why each report about the Kent State shootings necessarily expressed a bias of some kind.

As these examples suggest, rhetorical reading is not a magical technique for producing sophisticated arguments. Even when students read their sources rhetorically, they may merely report the results of this analysis in their essays. Such writing appears to be a college-level version of the knowledge-telling strategy described by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) and may be, as they suggest, the product of years of exposure to pedagogical practices that enshrine the acquisition and expression of information without a context or purpose.

To move students beyond analytic description into persuasive analysis, one can teach them to think of their observations as effects and to look for the causes that produced these effects. In rhetoric, the effects (text strategies, emotional arguments, and so on) are caused by the need to communicate, i.e., by areas of ignorance and disagreement. Such areas—especially where readers need information about a topic or need to be persuaded to think in a certain way—may conveniently labelled rhetorical gaps. To move students beyond merely reporting the content and rhetorical orientation of their source texts, I have taught them the concept of the rhetorical gap, as illustrated in Figure 4, and some simple heuristic questions for thinking about gaps.

Gaps were first described by Iser (1978) as unsaid material in a text that must be supplied or inferred by a reader. McCormick (1985) expanded the concept to include gaps between the text and the reader which may involve discrepancies of values, social conventions, language, or any other matter that readers must consider. Figure 4 uses Kinneavy's triangle to expand McCormick's treatment of gaps so that it applies to all three aspects of the communicative situation. In reading, for example, a gap between the "I-You" corners occurs when the reader is not a member of the author's intended audience; Shirley fell into this gap. Another gap occurs between the "You-It" corners when a reader does not understand the author's relationship to the material. Shirley fell into this one, too, as she did not know that Churchill began writing *The Birth of Britain* during the 1930's, when Hitler was rearming Germany and when the British government and most of Churchill's audience ardently favored disarmament. A gap between the reader and the text ("I-It") may stimulate a reader to learn whether she is the only person having this problem; a gap between other readers and the sources ("You-It") may motivate an adaptation or explanation of the material to a particular audience.

To discover gaps, students may need to learn heuristics for setting rhetorical writing goals, as shown in Figure 5.

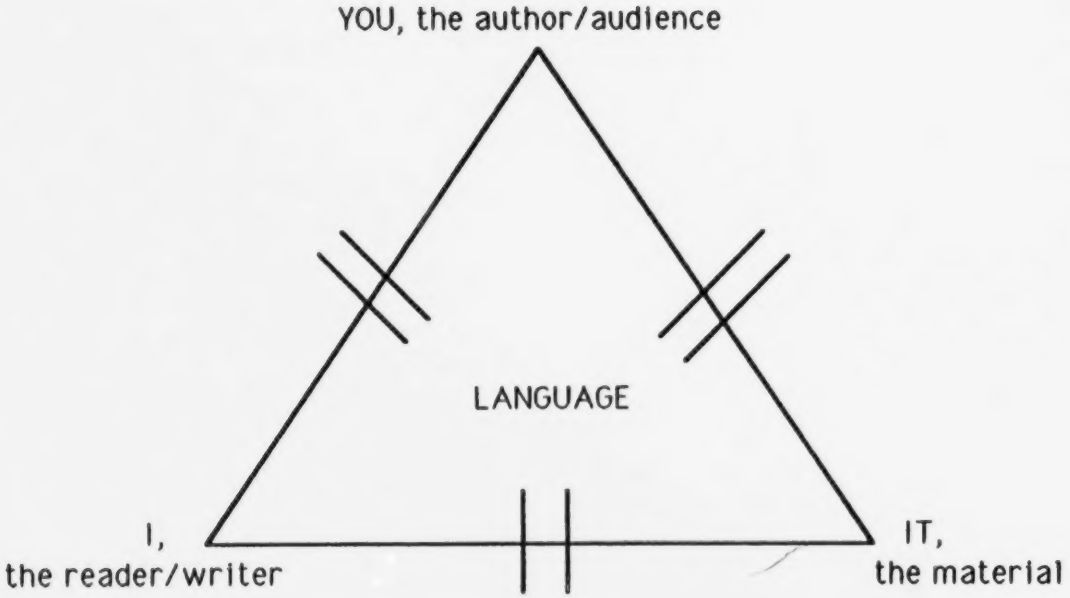
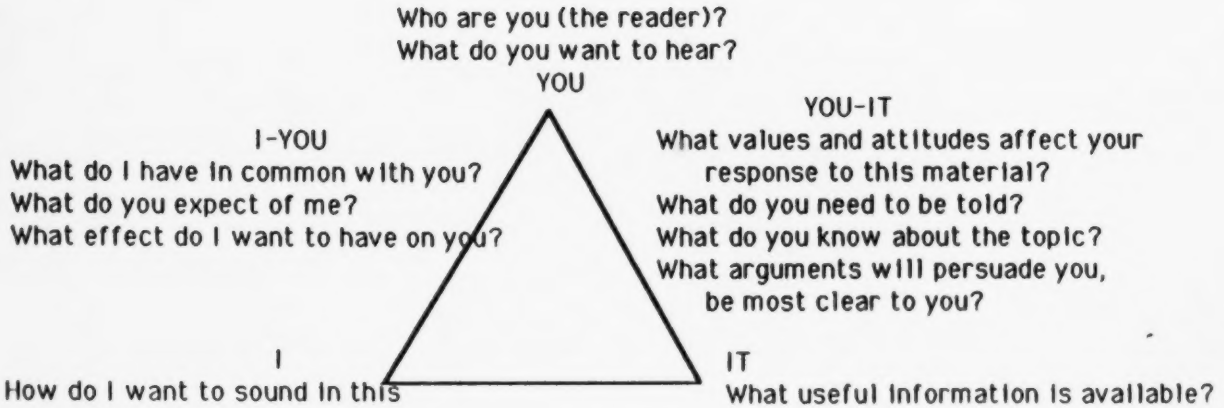


Figure 4: Rhetorical Gaps in Communication Situations


Who are you (the reader)?
What do you want to hear?
YOU
YOU-IT
What values and attitudes affect your response to this material?
What do you need to be told?
What do you know about the topic?
What arguments will persuade you, be most clear to you?
I-YOU
What do I have in common with you?
What do you expect of me?
What effect do I want to have on you?
I
How do I want to sound in this situation?
IT
What useful information is available?
I-IT
What are my beliefs about this topic?

I-YOU-IT
How can I help you solve your problem with this material?
How should I adapt this material so that it meets your needs?

Figure 5: Questions for Rhetorical Writing

The most salient questions for the research paper may be "Who are you?" "What is your problem with this topic?" and "How can I use these source materials to answer your question or solve your problem?" These sophisticated questions may be summarized and taught as "Why?" "How?" and "So what?" When our Shirleys learn to read sources as telling not "the eternal Truth" but "a truth to a particular audience," and when they learn to think of texts as existing to solve problems, they will find it easier to think of things to say.

For example, Terri, a sophomore at a private university, was struggling with an assignment that required her to analyze an issue and express an opinion on it, using two conflicting source texts, an interview, and personal material as sources. Using rhetorical reading strategies, Terri discovered a gap between Alfred Marbaise, a high school principal who advocates mandatory drug testing of all high school students, and students like those whom he would be testing (Terri's paper is used with her permission):

> Marbaise, who was a lieutenant in the U.S. Marines over thirty years ago [. . .] makes it very obvious that he cannot and will not tolerate any form of drug abuse in his school. For example, in paragraph seven he claims, "When students become involved in illegal activity, whether they realize it or not, they are violating other students . . . then I become very, very concerned . . . and I will not tolerate that."
>
> Because Marbaise has not been in school for nearly forty years himself, he does not take into consideration the reasons why kids actually use drugs. Today the social environment is so drastically different that Marbaise cannot understand a kid's morality, and that is why he writes from such a fatherly but distant point of view.

Terri's second paragraph answers the "Why?" question, i.e., "Why does Marbaise take a distant and fatherly point of view?" She must ask and answer this question in order to write a coherent evaluation of Marbaise's argument.

Seen in the context of rhetorical problem-solving, the problem of plagiarism appears less as a marketing issue and more as a problem deriving from a weak, non-rhetorical task representation. If students think they are supposed to reproduce source material in their papers, or if they know they are supposed to say something original but have no rhetorical problem to solve and no knowledge of how to find problems in sources that can be discussed, it becomes difficult for them to avoid plagiarizing. The common student decision to buy a paper when doing the assignment is seen as a meaningless fill-in-the-blanks activity (cf. Schwegler & Shamoon, 1983) thus becomes more understandable.

Let us now assume that Shirley has been taught the importance of creating an original argument, has learned how to read rhetorically, and has found things to say about the Battle of Agincourt. Are her troubles over? Will she now create that A paper that she yearns to write? Probably not. Despite her best intentions, Shirley will probably write another narrative/paraphrase of her sources. Why? Because by now the assignment asks her to do more than she can handle in a single draft. Shirley's task representation is now so rich, her set of goals so many, that she may be unable to juggle them all simultaneously.

If we consider the difficulties presented by researched writing assignments, we can see that they may overload students in either (or both) of two ways: First, they may require students to do a familiar subtask, such as reading sources, at a higher level of difficulty, e.g., longer sources, more sources, a more difficult topic. Second, they may require students to do new subtasks, such as building notes into an original argument. Such tasks may require task management skills, especially planning, that students have never developed and do not know how to attempt. The insecurity that results from trying a complex new task in a high-stakes situation is increased when students are asked to discover a problem worth writing about

because such tasks send students out on a treasure hunt with no guarantee that the treasure exists, that they will recognize it when they find it, or that when they find it they will be able to build it into a coherent argument. Terri's second draft earned a grade of D because she did not use her rhetorical insights to build an argument presented in a logical order. Although she asked the logical question about Marbaise's persona, she did not follow through by evaluating its implications for the probable success of his program.

A skillful student using the summarize-the-main-ideas approach can set her writing goals and even plan (i.e., outline) a paper before she reads the sources (I have essays from students describing how this is done; cf. also Nelson & Hayes, 1988). The rhetorical reading strategy, by contrast, requires writers to discover what is worth writing about and to decide how to say it as or after they read their sources. The strategy requires writers to change their content goals and to adjust their writing plans as their understanding of the topic develops. It requires writers, in Flower's (1988) term, to "construct" their purposes for writing as well as the content for their paper (for a description of constructive planning, cf. Flower, Schriver, Carey, Haas, & Hayes, 1988). In Flower's (1988) words, writers who construct a purpose, as opposed to writers who bring a predetermined purpose to a task, "create a web of purposes ... set goals, toss up possibilities ... create a multi-dimensional network of information ... a web of purpose ... a bubbling stew of various mental representations" (pp. 531-532). The complex indeterminacy of such a task may pose an intimidating challenge to students who have spent their lives summarizing main ideas and reporting facts.

Shirley may respond to the challenge by concentrating her energies on a familiar subtask, e.g., repeating material about the Battle of Agincourt, at the expense of struggling with an unfamiliar subtask such as creating an original argument. She may even deliberately simplify the task by representing it to herself as calling only for something that she knows how to do, hoping that Dr. Boyer will accept the paper as "close enough" to the original instructions. My students do this frequently. After all, when students decide to repeat the facts from their reading, they can at least feel certain that they will find material to write about.

Because of the limits of attentional memory, not to mention those caused by inexperience, writers can handle only so many task demands at a time. Thus, papers produced by seemingly inadequate task representations may well be essential rough drafts. What looks like a bad paper may well be a preliminary step, a way of meeting certain task demands in order to create a basis for thinking about new ones. My students consistently report that they need to marshall all of their ideas and text knowledge and get that material down on the page (i.e., tell their knowledge) before they can think about developing an argument (i.e., transform their knowledge). If Shirley's problem is that she has shelved certain task demands in favor of others, Dr. Boyer needs only to point out what Shirley should do to bring the paper into conformity with the assignment and offer Shirley a chance (or another chance) to revise.

The problem of cognitive overload can create a tremendous hurdle for students because so many of them believe that they should be able to write their paper in a single draft. Some students think that if they can't do the paper in one draft that means that something is wrong with them as writers, or with the assignment, or with us for giving the assignment. Often, such students will react to their drafts with anger and despair, throwing away perfectly usable rough drafts, and then coming to us and saying that they can't do the assignment.

On the other hand, if we teach students to work with their drafts, we can teach them to build their observations into analyses and their analyses into persuasive arguments. Terri's first draft about drug testing told her knowledge about her sources' opinions on mandatory drug testing and reported her responses to these opinions. Her second draft contained the rhetorical analysis partly quoted above, but presented the material in a scrambled order and did not build the analysis into an argument. Only in a third draft was Terri able to make her point:

> Not once does Marbaise consider any of the psychological reasons why kids turn away from reality. He fails to realize that drug testing will not answer their questions, ease their frustrations, or respond to their cries for attention, but will merely further alienate himself and other authorities from helping kids deal with their real problems.

This comment represents part of Terri's answer to the heuristic "So what? Why does Marbaise's position matter?" Using the heuristic allowed her to evaluate his position and to engage in a persuasive dialogue about the topic on terms of equal authority with the source.

If we pace our assignments to allow for this pattern of drafts to manifest itself, we can do a great deal to build our students' confidence in their writing. If we treat the researched essay as a sequence of assignments instead of as a one-shot paper with a single due date, we can teach our Shirleys, Marys, Charlies, and Terris to build on their drafts, to use what they can do easily as a bridge to what we want them to learn to do. In this way, we can improve our students' writing habits. More importantly, however, we can help our students to see themselves as capable writers and as active, able, problem solvers. Most importantly, we can use the sequence of drafts to demand that our students demonstrate increasingly sophisticated kinds of analytic and rhetorical proficiency.

Rhetorical reading and writing heuristics can help students to represent tasks in rich and interesting ways. They can help students to set up complex goal structures (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1982). They offer students many ways to think about their reading and writing texts. These tools, in other words, encourage students to work creatively.

And after all, creativity is what research should be about. If Shirley writes a creative paper, she has found a constructive solution that is new to her and which other people can use, a solution to a problem that she and other people share. If we think of creativity as thought leading to solutions to problems and of problems as embodied in questions that people ask about situations, the researched essay offers infinite possibilities. Viewed in this way, a creative idea answers a question that the audience or any single reader wants answered. The question could be, "Why did Henry V win the Battle of Agincourt?" or, "How can student readers protect themselves against nationalistic bias when they study history?" or any of a thousand other questions. If we teach our Shirleys to see themselves as scholars who work to find answers to problem questions, and if we teach them to set reading and writing goals for themselves that will allow them to think constructively, we will be doing the most exciting work that teachers can do, nurturing creativity.

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Appendix A
Page 1 of Shirley's Paper

The Battle of Agincourt ranks as one of England's greatest military triumphs. It was the most brilliant victory of the Middle Ages, bar none. It was fought on October 25, 1414, against the French near the French village of Agincourt.

Henry V had claimed the crown of France and had invaded France with an army estimated at anywhere between 10,000[1] and 45,000 men.[2] During the seige of Harfleur dysentery had taken 1/3 of them,[3] his food supplies had been depleted,[4] and the fall rains had begun. In addition the French had assembled a huge army and were marching toward him. Henry decided to march to Calais, where his ships were to await him.[5] He intended to cross the River Somme at the ford of Blanchetaque,[6] but, falsely informed that the ford was guarded,[7] he was forced to follow the flooded Somme up toward its source. The French army was shadowing him on his right. Remembering the slaughters of Crecy and Poictiers, the French constable, Charles d'Albret, hesitated to fight,[8] but when Henry forded the Somme just above Amiens[9] and was just

[The rest of the page contains footnotes. Dr. Boyer changed "between" and "and" to "from" and "to" (line 5), circled 1/3, underlined "Poictiers," and commented, "You footnote material that does not need to be footnoted."]

Appendix B
Range of Research Assignment Subtasks

simplest	easy	harder	hardest
1 main source	2 - 3 main sources	many sources	comprehensive search
paragraphs	1-2 pages each	short articles	long articles; books
familiar topic	abstract familiar topic	unfamiliar topic*	factual unfamiliar topic*
use all available material or what you liked best	select best/ most obvious (high level) material	select most relevant material from anywhere in sources	formally select and evaluate material
quote	summarize, paraphrase	use as evidence/ proof in simple argument (e.g., pro/con)	use as proof in complex original argument
discuss sources separately in the order read or in an order of approval	collate material from auxiliary sources into one main source	find and rank main ideas; discuss in order of time or importance	select, rank, &/or apply ideas to original problem or argument
write story of search	use generic structure, e.g., narrative or formal proposal	use structure of main source or sources	create an original structure
repeat purpose of sources		create original purpose	
repeat material	respond to material	show mastery of material	use material to say something new

no comments or comments at end in separate paragraph or randomly placed	personal response comments systematically interspersed throughout paper	implied or undeveloped synthesizing concept &/or rhetorical purpose controls use of material	stated original argument controls rhetorical purpose plus other goals, e.g., formal evaluation
(additive strategies)		(hierarchical strategies)	

*As the writer learns the material, the unfamiliar topic will become familiar. Such learning requires extra effort, however.

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